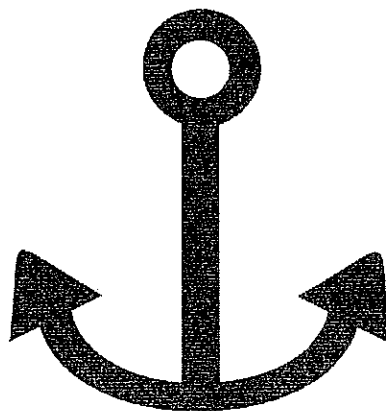
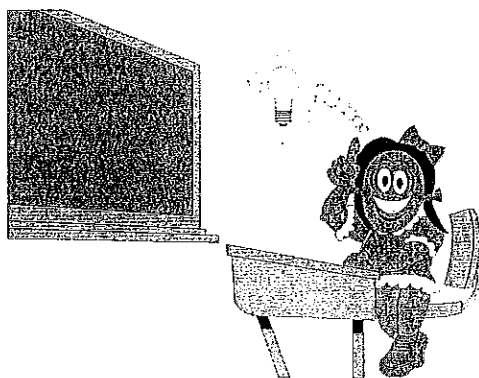


## Using Anchor(ing) Activities

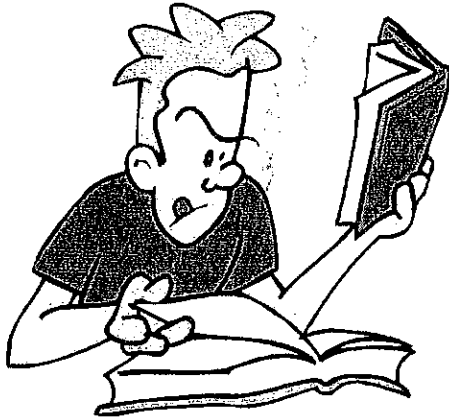


### RAPID ROBIN



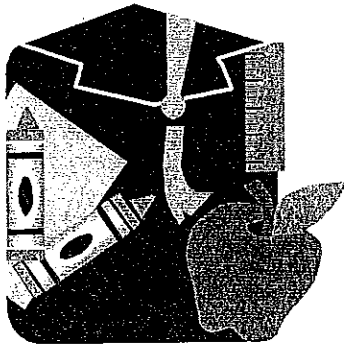
The "Dreaded Early Finisher"

## **“I’m Not Finished” Freddie**



“It takes him  
an hour-and-a-half  
to watch 60 Minutes.”

## **One premise in a differentiated classroom:**

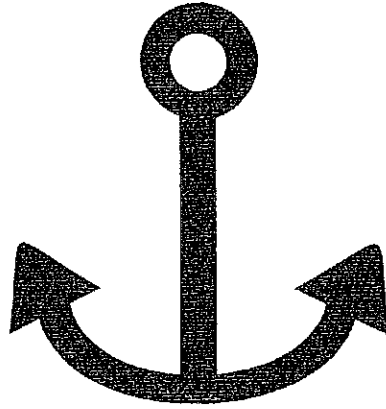


*“ In this class we  
are never  
finished---*

*Learning is a  
process that  
never ends.”*

# Anchor Activities

↑ Anchor activities are ongoing assignments that students can work on independently throughout a unit, a grading period or longer.



## The Purpose of an Anchor Activity is to:

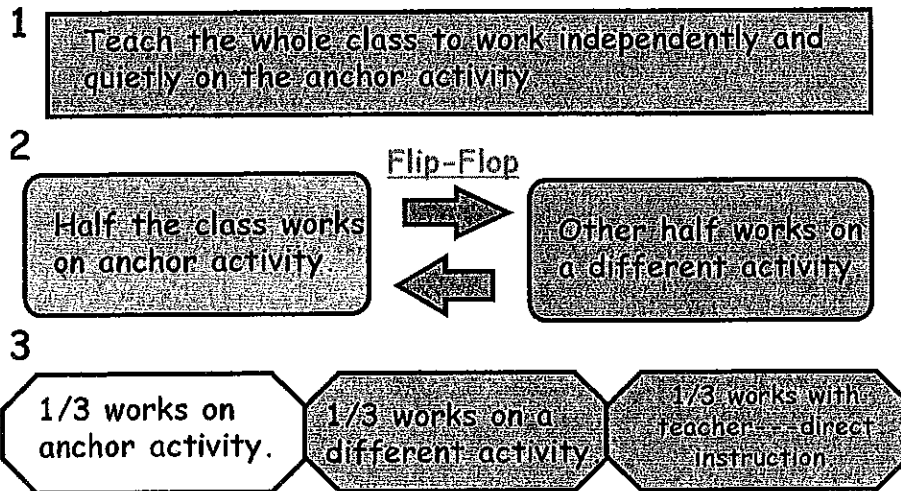
Provide meaningful work for students when they finish an assignment or project, when they first enter the class or when they are "stumped".

Provide ongoing tasks that tie to the content and instruction.

Free up the classroom teacher to work with other groups of students or individuals.



## Using Anchor Activities to Create Groups



## ANCHOR ACTIVITIES

### Can be:

used in any subject

whole class assignments

small group or individual assignments

tiered to meet the needs of different readiness levels

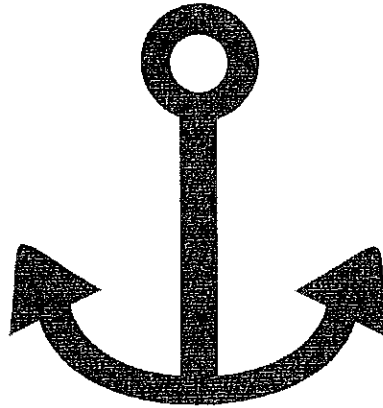
Interdisciplinary for use across content areas or teams



# ANCHOR ACTIVITIES

## Work best:

- ↓ when expectations are clear and the tasks are taught and practiced prior to use.
- ↓ when students are held accountable for on task behavior and/or task completion.



## Planning for Anchor Activities

Subject/Content Area:

Name and description of anchor activity:

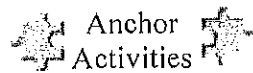


How will activity be introduced to students?

How will the activity be managed and monitored?

- |                     |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| - Points            | - Percentage of Final Grade  |
| - Rubric            | - Portfolio Check            |
| - Checklist         | - Teacher/Student Conference |
| - Random Check      | - Peer Review                |
| - On Task Behaviors | - Other _____                |

# BEST PRACTICES: INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES & TECHNIQUES



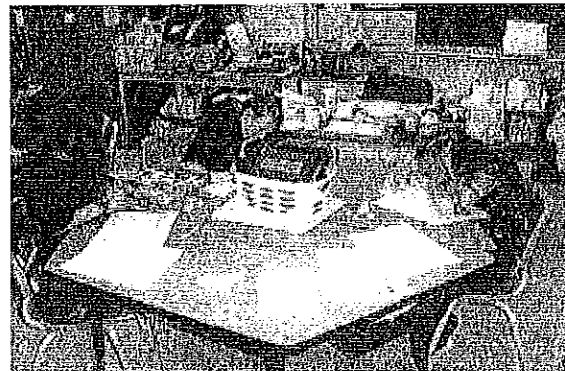
"In this class we are never finished. Learning is a process that never ends."  
Carol Ann Tomlinson

## What are anchor activities?

- specified ongoing activities on which students work independently
- ongoing assignments that students can work on throughout a unit

## Why use anchor activities?

- provide a strategy for teachers to deal with "ragged time" when students complete work at different times
- they allow the teacher to work with individual students or groups
- provides ongoing activities that relate to the content of the unit
- allow the teacher to develop independent group work strategies in order to incorporate a mini lab of computers in classroom



## When are anchor activities used?

- \*to begin the day
- \*when students complete an assignment
- \*when students are stuck and waiting for help

## Types of anchor activities

- \*DEAR Time - Silent Reading
- \*Journal Writing or Learning Logs
- \*Vocabulary Work
- \*Math "Problem of the Day"
- \*Learning Centre
- \*Spelling Practice
- \*Portfolio Management

## \*Agenda notes

### Examples:

In many classrooms, students work on routine activities like journal writing, vocabulary activities and spelling. These types of activities can be used as "Anchor Activities" that are options for students after assigned work is complete. The goal is to have students moving independently from one assignment to another without needing teacher direction.

Anchor activities can be posted within the classroom in a variety of ways. Simply listing the activities on a chart or chalkboard is one method. Below are additional methods of presentation used by teachers.

### How can I assess anchor activities?

Help students to take responsibility for their roles in classroom routines. Clear expectations, rationale for expectations and student self evaluation are integral to developing classroom procedures and student ownership within the learning environment.

How can I assess individual anchor activity work?

- \*Ongoing anecdotal records and checklists
- \*Student conferences for evaluation and goal setting
- \*Learning journals
- \*Student portfolios
- \*Rubrics
- \*Random checks
- \*Peer review

### Resources:

Special Thanks to:  
Heather Loewenhardt, Heather Thomas,

Andra Donbrook, Regina Public School  
teachers

Internet Resources

Using Anchor Activities - Rapid Robin The  
"Dreaded Early Finisher"

Anchor Activities - a list of sample activities  
in different subject areas; although American,  
can provide ideas

Differentiation Strategies - Instructional  
Strategies to use in Differentiating  
Curriculum

Communicating in the Literacy Classroom -  
sample of how a Gr. 3 teacher uses anchor  
activities

Vocabulary Anchor Activities - a sample  
daily anchor activity

Text Resources by Carol Ann Tomlinson  
*The Differentiated Classroom -  
Responding to the Needs of All Learners*,  
Association for Curriculum and  
Development. Virginia, 1999.

*How to Differentiate in Mixed Ability  
Classrooms* - Association for Curriculum  
and Development. Virginia, 2001

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<file:///E:/Strategies%20Materials%20for%20Participants/Anchor%20Activities/Anchor%20Activities%20description.htm>



## **Anchor Activity Planning and Implementation**

**Indicators and Outcomes:** Have all the skills and/or concepts been taught previously?



**Name and description of Anchor Activity:**

**Differentiation of Anchor:** How will you make it respectful of each ability level/ learning profile in the class?

**Instructional Task:** What do you have to do so all students can work on the anchor independently?

**Materials needed:** What will students need? Where will the materials be?

## Management and Monitoring

**Expectations:** When do you expect students to work on this?

**Due date:** How much time do you want it to take? Will there be checkpoint due dates along the way?

**Points and/or rubric:** What is the activity worth as a grade? Do you want to grade them or just give credit?

**Accountability:** What's collected? Where does finished work go? What is checked by the teacher? the students?

### Additional Implementation Suggestions:

- ❖ Go over the entire anchor activity with the class.
- ❖ Model all of the games.
- ❖ If you are using contracts, go over the contract with everyone and make sure they all understand the expectations.
- ❖ Hand out rubrics and review them.
- ❖ Point out where materials will be kept.
- ❖ Be clear on expectations.
- ❖ Review management strategies with the class so they know what to do if they have a question and you're busy.
- ❖ Let students know if any of the activities can be done at home or if they're all meant to be done in class.

### Sample Generic Rubric

4	Exceeds the requirements (ex: does more than the minimum number of constructions), more creativity displayed, understanding of concept demonstrated at a deeper level
3	Meets all requirements of task, all mathematics is accurate, understanding of the concept is demonstrated, creativity is demonstrated
2	Most of the mathematics is accurate, understanding of concepts partially developed, some or little creativity displayed
1	Some or little mathematics correct, understanding of concept poorly developed, little or no creativity

*Sample Student Contract for Anchor Activity*

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

I will complete the following activities:

Activity completed

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

☐☐☐☐

check point due dates \_\_\_\_\_

due date

signatures \_\_\_\_\_

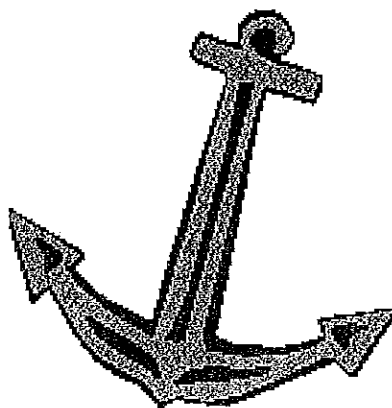
\_\_\_\_\_

FINAL DUE DATE \_\_\_\_\_

student signature \_\_\_\_\_

parent signature \_\_\_\_\_

teacher signature \_\_\_\_\_



# Anchor Activities

These anchor activities have been created by Kelly Thornton and Cory Gray from RESA's 2001 gifted endorsement classes. Anchor activities are designed to provide meaningful activities for students to pick up and be engaged in when they finish assignments, while they wait for assistance, or whenever they have a bit of spare time.

## **SPELLING:**

- Create a greeting card. Be sure to include some of your Spelling words in the message. Use lots of color and do your best work.
- Illustrate your spelling words. Don't actually write the word, but make your picture really reflect the meaning of your word.
- Create newspaper headlines using your spelling words.
- Create an advertisement/poster for some type of product using some of your spelling words.
- Use sign language to spell your words. You can refer to the sign language cards to make sure you know the signs.
- Find a newspaper or magazine article. Find words in the article that can be replaced with your spelling words.
- Create a crossword puzzle or a word search using your spelling words. Provide an answer key and give it to a friend to complete.
- Compose a letter to a parent (or a teacher) in written form or on the computer and give it to them or e-mail it to them.
- Use some of your spelling words to write a poem. You can use the poetry resource book to learn about the different types of poetry.

- Create categories or groups for your spelling words, then figure out a way to regroup them into different categories/groups.

## **READING:**

- Check out and read a biography about the life of someone you are interested in learning about. Then, prepare a short biography in your own words to share with the class.
- Write a letter to the author of a book you've enjoyed.
- Forecast the sales of a new book in a series or by a certain author. Justify your sales forecast.
- Create a best-seller list for your ten favorite books!
- Design illustrations what you think would go well with a favorite chapter book.
- Compare and contrast two books by the same author.
- Compare and contrast two books from the same genre (i.e.: fiction, biography, mystery, realistic fiction, humorous, etc).
- Find a fiction book and a non-fiction book that could be paired together. (Ex: a nonfiction book about the Civil War and a chapter book set during the Civil War).
- Rewrite the ending of a book you've read and make it end a different way.
- Create an original dialogue between two characters from a book you've read.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

- Choose an important event that took place in U.S. or world history (example: the first atomic bomb explosion during WWII). Explain how science advancements at the time made the event possible.
- Choose an important person from U.S. or world history. Write a letter to him/her and ask any questions you'd like answered by that person.

- Choose an important individual from some part of U.S. or world history. Then, write a first-hand journal entry that might have been written by him/her during that time period.
- Find similarities and differences between two events that took place at different times in history. You may want to illustrate the comparisons with a Venn diagram.
- Critique a political leader's "platform" on a debatable issue in current events.
- Create an imaginary continent. Then, draw and name the countries on that continent. Be sure to include borders, capital cities, etc. Then, write about one of the countries. Explain its government, culture, and laws.
- List the populations of 8-10 countries in order from greatest to smallest. Explain why you think the populations are the way they are.
- Brainstorm ways you could've contributed to your family's well-being during the depression if you lived during that time.
- Research a famous entrepreneur of the "gilded age." Find out how he/she earned a fortune and what he/she did with it.
- Find an interesting book written during a particular period in history. Explain how this book might've had an impact on how people thought about issues during that time period.
- Come up with a "get rich quick" scheme you could've used during the "roaring twenties" to make your fortune. Write a business plan.

## SCIENCE

- Write a letter to a member of the government about an environmental issue we've talked about in class.
- Write a letter to a famous scientist or person who has contributed to science. Be sure to include questions you'd really like this person to answer for you.

- Come up with a list of new "essential questions" you'd like to have answered about our unit of study (or future units from our web).
- Create a perfect "habitat" for an animal of your choice. Use any format you'd like to illustrate your habitat.
- Write an experiment you could conduct to teach others about a science concept you've learned in class.
- Create a mind map/web using Inspiration on the computer to illustrate a science concept to share with others.
- Research an important event or invention in Science. Find out what was going on at the time of this event in world or U.S. history.
- Make a list of what you think are the top ten environmental issues in today's world. Be sure to put them in order of importance.
- Make a list of ten things about life that are difficult and/or inconvenient and come up with ideas for inventions that could help make these things easier or more convenient.
- Go to the library and find a non-fiction book about something scientific that interests you. Become the "resident expert" for our class and share your findings during class meeting.

## MATH

- Review Murdock's electric bills/water bills from the last three months. Find an average amount spent for the three months. Think of a list of ways we at Murdock might be able to reduce the amount of energy or water we use to save money and resources.
- Research calendars or other time-keeping devices. Find out when and by whom they were first used.
- Research money and bartering systems. Work to discover where and when these systems originated.

- Find out the names and values of at least 5 different types of foreign currency. Be sure to tell where the currencies come from and what denominations they come in.

- Plan a road trip across the U.S. stopping by at least 5 famous landmarks. Use a map/map scale to measure distances. Then, add up the total amount of mileage the entire trip (round trip) would take. Decide how many days you'd be gone and calculate the cost of gas, motel rooms, and meals for a family of four. What would the total cost of the trip be?

- Imagine a trip you'd really like to take. With permission from your teacher, visit a travel website (such as [travelocity.com](http://travelocity.com)) and check on available plane tickets and lodgings. Add up the total amount it would cost you to take the trip. How could you get the best deal?

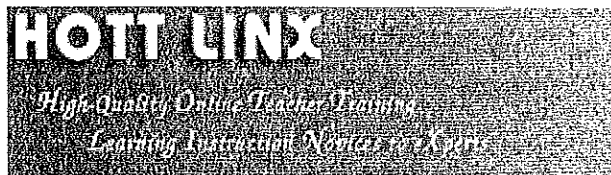
- With your teacher's permission, visit the MapQuest website and plan a trip to somewhere in the U.S. Map the journey and figure total mileage.

Updated 3/20/02  
Eulouise Williams

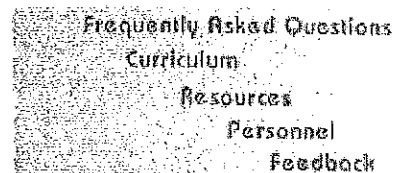
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# HOTT LINX Anchor Activity



National Research Center



on the Gifted & Talented

## STRATEGY TITLE: Anchoring Activity

Author: Ms. Holly Gould

Author's Email: <mailto:hottlinx@virginia.edu>

Curriculum Area(s):

Language Arts, Math, Science,  
Social Studies

Grade Level:

6th Grade

Time Required : 5 minutes

Instructional Grouping: Heterogeneous - GT Pull  
Out, GT Honors, LD, ESL

### Explanation of Strategy:

Anchoring activities (Tomlinson, 2001) are specified ongoing activities that students work on independently at the beginning of class, when the student finishes their assigned work to a high level of quality, or when they are stuck on part of a task and are waiting for assistance. Anchoring activities were developed to help teachers deal with "ragged time" that occurs when students finish tasks at different times, to provide ongoing tasks that are related to the content and/or skills that students need, and to free up the teacher to work with groups of students or individuals while giving the others something meaningful to work on.

### Overview:

When the students come into class or the teacher is working with a group of students on content-related material, students participating in anchoring activities may be doing one of the following:

Reading - silent or "Accelerated Reader"

Journal writing

Keeping process logs

Managing a portfolio

Practicing skills such as spelling, computation, learning with math using tubs of

manipulatives, and vocabulary  
Working on learning packets  
Working at learning centers  
Working at interest centers

When introducing anchoring activities:

1. Teach the whole class to work independently and quietly on the tasks.
2. Move toward having half of the class work on the anchor activity (which can be adjusted according to student readiness, interest, and/or learner preference if needed), while the other half engages in a different content-based activity designed specifically for their needs.
3. Later on or the next day, you can switch groups, with the group working on the anchoring activity now working on the content-based activity and vice-versa.
4. Next, you can have a third of the class working on the anchoring activity as the two-thirds of the class working on two differentiated content-based tasks. Many combinations are possible.

#### **Materials:**

Materials vary according to the anchoring activity.

#### **Examples of Use:**

In an elementary classroom, students who the teacher has observed using action verbs could be writing in their journals while the teacher works with a group of students on using action verbs. The next day, the teacher may meet with the group who mastered the action verbs to work on building a bank of more complex action verbs, or on another skill that they need to master.

In a middle school classroom, some students could be working with key vocabulary that will be important in the next unit while the teacher works with a group on understanding the events that led to World War II.

In a secondary math class, students could be working on SAT math problems while the teacher meets with part of the class to introduce new content and skills.

#### **Practical Hints for Implementation:**

Make sure that:

The students have had practice and understand how to work independently. Specific management procedures should already be in place to address student questions, gaining assistance from peers. At first, the teacher should simply monitor that these routines and expectations are clear and enforced before moving on to the next step.

The activities can be completed with little to no teacher intervention or assistance.

The activities are not ?fluffy? but meaningful and respectful of the learner. These activities are tied to specific content or skills that need to be reinforced. They are not coloring book pages or crossword puzzles that are not tied to content or skills.

You have a plan for managing and monitoring the activity.

#### **Related Web Sites:**

<http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/eii/gr/powerpoint/anchoractivities/index.htm>

#### **Attachments:**

None

#### **Supplemental Resources:**

Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). How to differentiate in mixed-ability classrooms.  
Alexandria, VA: Association for the Supervision of Curriculum Development.

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